BRITISH COLUMBIA

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Prices

- **British Columbia's consumer price index (CPI) was 0.4% higher in August than in the same month last year.** BC's inflation rate has been hovering around the 0.4% mark in recent months, and has remained at or below one percent since June of 1996. Nationally, the inflation rate edged down to 0.8%, with Newfoundland (+0.2%), Nova Scotia (+0.4%) and BC (+0.4%) posting the smallest increases. Prince Edward Island, which has been experiencing deflation since March, saw a 1.1% decline in the overall price level in August. Inflation rates were highest in Alberta (+1.5%) and Manitoba (+1.5%).

  Victoria's inflation rate remained unchanged at 0.2% in August, while Vancouver's rate was down sharply, dropping 0.6 percentage points to 0.5% last month. Calgary (+2.0%) had the highest inflation rate of any major Canadian centre.

  Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **BC manufacturing shipments showed virtually no change between June and July.** Shipments edged up 0.1% (seasonally adjusted), after increasing 5.6% in the previous month. The July increase was largely due to a rebound in the province's wood manufacturing sector, which posted its second consecutive monthly increase (+3.6%) in July. Paper shipments were down 7.6%, but shipments by BC's food industry were 1.4% higher than in June.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Nationally, the value of manufacturing shipments fell 2.4% in July, as shipments decreased in all but three provinces.** Newfoundland (-17.2%) and New Brunswick (-11.4%) posted the largest declines. Shipments were down for the fourth straight month in Ontario (-3.0%), and Quebec (-2.4%), where three quarters of Canada's manufactured goods are produced. The lingering effects of the General Motors strike in the US, and longer than normal summer plant closures in the auto industry have contributed to a four-month-long downturn at the national level. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of goods exported from the province was 7.7% lower in July than in the same month last year, marking the eighth consecutive year-over-year decline.** Exports of forest products continued to fall, decreasing to 8.1% below the July 1997 level. International sales of industrial goods (-26.4%), energy (-19.5%) and agriculture and fish products (-7.9%) were also down. However, machinery and equipment exports, which make up about 11% of the BC total, were 19.9% higher than in July 1997.

  The decline in BC's exports has been mitigated by the free-fall of the Canadian dollar, which was worth about 10% less this July than in July 1997. A lower Canadian dollar benefits exporters since international contracts to purchase BC products are often denominated in US funds. As a result, a devaluation of our currency translates into higher Canadian dollar receipts for exporters.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canadian exports dropped 2.3% in July, with six provinces posting declines.** Exports from New Brunswick (-20.6%) and Saskatchewan (-19.3%) plummeted, and Ontario's exports were down (-3.6%) for the first time since December 1996. Newfoundland (+10.8%) posted the strongest increase. Alberta's exports rose (+2.3%) for the first time since last November. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Report **Students in the Labour Market**

Did you know...?
Sixty-two cents of every dollar earned by Canadian periodicals comes from advertising revenue

- **Sales by wholesalers in the province continued to slide in July, dropping to 0.5% (seasonally adjusted) below the June level.** The decline was part of nation-wide trend. Canadian sales were also down for the third straight month, decreasing 0.4% in August.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Public Sector Employment

- **During the second quarter of 1998, there were an average of 348,398 British Columbians employed by federal, provincial and local governments and institutions.** Six out of every ten public sector workers were employed by health and social service institutions, school boards and post-secondary institutions

  The number of public sector workers in the province continued to edge down, declining to 0.2% below the level in the second quarter. Local (-5.0%), provincial (-2.9%) and federal (-1.5%) government departments and agencies had fewer workers on the payroll. Employment at school boards dipped 0.2%, but there were more people working in health care (+2.7%) and post-secondary education (+1.6%) institutions. Employment at crown corporations also rose (+1.3%). Nationally, the number of public sector employees dropped 1.1% in the second quarter, as all provinces except New Brunswick (+1.1%), Newfoundland (+0.6%) and Alberta (+0.1%) reported declines. The largest decreases were in Quebec (-2.2%) and Ontario (-1.5%).

  Source: SC, Public Institutions Division

- **The number of public sector workers for every 1,000 BC residents decreased from 89 to 88 between the first and second quarters.** BC had the second-lowest employment-to-population ratio in the country, after Ontario (83). Alberta (90) was the only other province where the ratio was below the national average (93).

  Source: SC, Public Institutions Division and BC STATS

Tourism

- **Visitor entries to British Columbia from the US and overseas reached 1.1 million in July, an increase of 2.4% from the same month last year.** Year-to-date, the number of visitor entries was up 5.2% from the first seven months of 1997.

  Entries to the province from the United States continued to provide the impetus for growth in the number of visitors to the province. US entries, which accounted for more than 80% of all border crossings by non-residents in July, were 4.6% higher than in the same month last year. While growth in the number of entries from the US remains strong, it has been tapering off. Entries from the US had been growing at double-digit rates during the winter and early spring months. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Religious Observance and the Family

- **Canadians who attend religious services every week report having happier, less stressful lives and happier relationships with their partners than those who do not attend services at all.** The odds of having a very happy marital relationship is 1.5 times greater for people who attend religious services weekly than for non-attenders. They are also less likely to experience a marriage breakup. Among people who married in the 1970s, 16% of marriages of those who attended religious services weekly did not last 15 years, compared to 34% for non-attenders. One factor contributing to this difference could be that attenders are more likely (57%) than non-attenders (36%) to stay married for the sake of their children. They are also less likely to view lack of love and respect (76%, versus 92%) and drinking too much (68%, versus 75%) as sufficient grounds for divorce. However, they are as unlikely to forgive unfaithful behaviour (86%, versus 88%) as those who do not attend services. *Source: SC, Social Trends, Autumn 1998*

- **The 1996 General Social Survey indicates that 45% of Canadian adults are affiliated with the Roman Catholic church, 20% with mainline Protestant denominations, and 6% with conservative Protestant denominations.** Three percent of Canadian adults are affiliated with Eastern religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, and 14% have no religious affiliation. *Source: SC, Social Trends, Autumn 1998*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Sept 18, 1998

Infoline Report: Students in the Labour Market

July 1998

Contact: Stephen Pal (CEISS) / (250) 413-4417
BC Centre for Education Information Standards and Services

Originally published in July 1998 issue of *Labour Force Statistics*. Annual subscription is $60 + GST

This article focuses on recent labour force activity of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. during the month of July. Summer employment conditions did improve somewhat in July 1998 for older students aged 20 to 24 who saw a drop in their unemployment rate from July 1997. Students aged 15 to 19 experienced a higher unemployment rate this July from a year earlier.

1. Introduction

The monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada provides information on labour market characteristics of full-time students in B.C A supplement to the Labour Force Survey conducted in the months of May to September focuses on the labour market performance of recent full-time students during the summer months.

Many post-secondary students will seek summer employment (especially full-time work) from May until August, while secondary school students will be more likely available for jobs (especially full-time work) in July and August. Given these differences, this article focuses upon the month of July only, when both secondary and post-secondary students are available for summer work.

2. Definitions and Issues Associated With Student Labour Force Data

Full-time students . .. Youths (aged 15 to 24) are given the status of "full-time student" if they reported that they were attending school full-time in March of the current calendar year.

Returning and not returning . . . Students are further categorized by their intentions to return or not return to school full-time in the fall or if they are unsure of their intentions. The number of all full-time students aged 15 to 24 has risen by just over 50 per cent from 221,000 in July 1977 to 333,000 in July 1998. The number of returning students rose over this period by 56 per cent, but only rose 30 per cent for not-returning students (including students who are not sure if returning). Most of these increases in numbers of students have taken place in the 1990's. The returning students category remains significantly larger in numbers and proportion than the "not sure/not returning" category. The proportion of returning students to total students stood at 82 per cent in July 1998.

Age of students surveyed . . . The two age groups of full-time students covered include those aged 15 to 19 (a good portion of whom would be secondary school students) and those aged 20 to 24 (most likely attending either a public or private post-secondary institution). In terms of relative size, the age 15 to 19 group of full-time students is three times as large as the age 20 to 24 group.

Older students not covered in survey . . . Full-time students covered in the Statistics Canada supplemental summer survey are limited to students between the ages of 15 to 24. However, persons aged 25 and older are a growing and significant component of overall full-time post-secondary students in B.C. For example between 1984 and 1995, the estimated number of full-time students in B.C. aged 25 to 29 more than doubled from 6,000 to 14,000.

Part-time students not surveyed . . . Students aged 15 to 24 who attend, or recently attended school part-time are not reported in the data published by Statistics Canada. However, it should be noted that there are significant and growing numbers of part-time students of all ages, especially persons aged 25 and older.

Semester systems and co-op programs may also complicate generalisations about the length and timing of the school year for those in post-secondary studies. Those on different semester systems who are not attending school full-time in March or are on a work placement program, may not be covered by the survey.

3. Developments in Student Summer Employment for the Month of July

As seen in Figure 1, the number of total full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. (both returning and other), remained relatively unchanged during the 1980's. While the population of this age group fell, student numbers held as participation rates in education rose. The number of full-time students during the 1990's has steadily risen due to both demographic increases and further education participation increases. This large increase in numbers of students in the 1990's has likely increased the competitiveness of the summer student job market relative to the situation in the late 1980's.

Figure 1: All Full-time Students, Age 15-24

As seen in Figure 2, employment levels in the month of July for returning students in B.C. during the 1980's saw slow but steady increases. In part this reflected the extended recovery of the economy from the 1981/82 recession. Beginning in 1991, the number of employed students aged 15 to 19 started declining back to levels seen in the mid 1980's. Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 has been generally rising since 1987.

More recently, employment levels for students aged 15 to 19 fell to 84,000 in July 1998 from 88,000 in July 1997, remaining well below their high of 95,000 in 1991. For those returning students aged 20 to 24, employment levels in July 1998 rose after a decline in July 1997. Employment for these students was estimated at 42,000 in July 1998, up from 34,000 in July 1997.

Overall employment for all returning students aged 15 to 24 together rose to 126,000 in July 1998 from 122,000 in July 1997.

Figure 2 - Employment Levels for Returning Students in July, 1990-1997

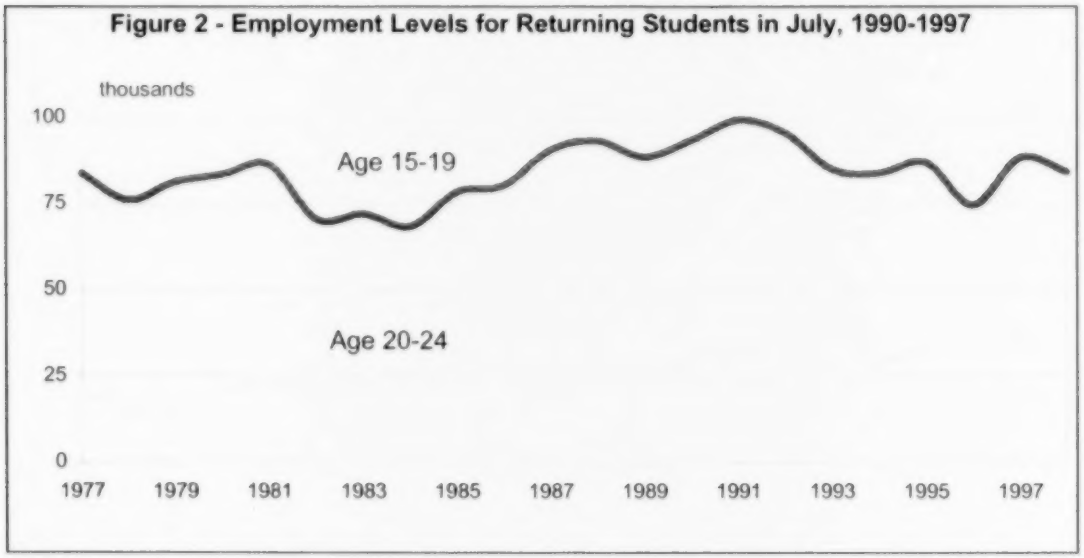


Figure 3 displays the employment rate (employment to population ratio) for returning students in the month of July. After a period of relatively steady employment rates in the late 1980's, this variable has declined for both age groups in the 1990's, particularly for those aged 15 to 19. The employment rate for re-

turning students in July 1998 compared to July 1997 fell by 1.7 percentage points for those aged 15 to 19 to 42.1 per cent. It also fell by over 2 percentage points for those aged 20 to 24 to 56.2 per cent, its lowest level in the 1990's.

Overall, a smaller portion of returning students in July 1998 (48 per cent), were engaged in summer employment compared to 1990 when 67 per cent of students were employed.

Figure 3 - Employment Rate of Returning Students in July, 1990-1998

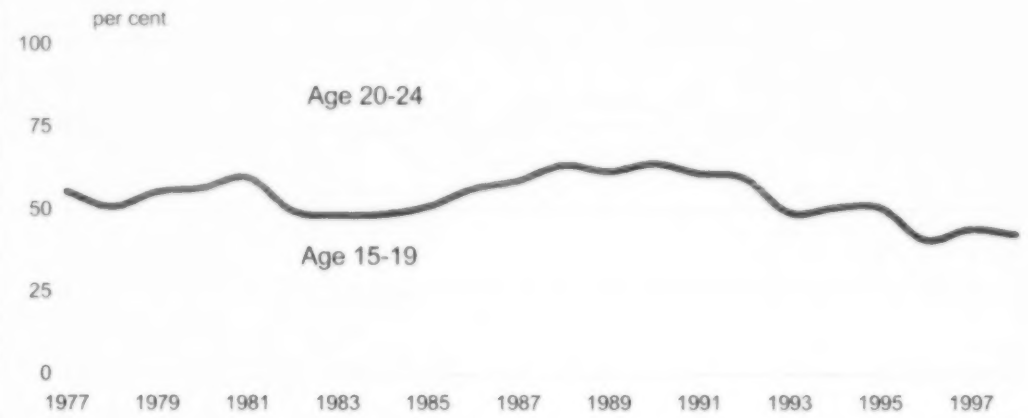
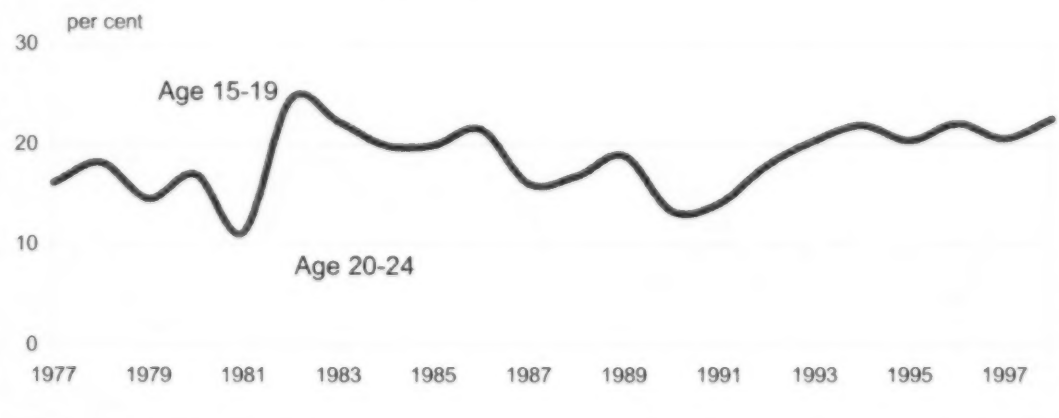


Figure 4 shows unemployment rates for returning students for both age groups in July. The unemployment rate has risen for full-time returning students aged 15-19 since the early 1990's, but has remained fairly level since 1994. For older students, unemployment rates have fluctuated during the 1990's, but remain half that of those aged 15 to 19.

More recently the unemployment rate for students aged 15 to 19 in July 1998 rose to 22.4 per cent from 20.5 per cent in July 1997. For those students aged 20 to 24, their unemployment rate dropped to 10.2 per cent in July 1998 from 13.4 per cent a year earlier.

Figure 4 - Unemployment Rate of Returning Students, July 1977-1998



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Infoline

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/98	% change on one year ago
BC	3,958.7	1.4
Canada	30,488.9	1.0
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1997	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	25,039	0.2
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,515	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jul	2,758	-5.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jul	2,149	-7.7
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jul	2,794	0.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Aug '98	one year ago
BC	110.4	0.4
Canada	108.8	0.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug '98	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,040	0.5
Employed - BC	1,864	0.5
Unemployed - BC	176	0.5
		Aug '97
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.6	8.6
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.3	9.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Sept 16/98	Sept 17/97
Prime Business Rate	7.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.95	5.65
- 5 year	7.30	7.00
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Sept 16/98	Sept 17/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5034	1.3885
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.6652	0.7202
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jun '98	one year ago
BC	622.54	0.2
Canada	605.61	0.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Updated in the subscription section of our Internet site is ***Quarterly Regional Statistics***. The updates include a jump to Population Projection P-23 completed July 1998, including our notes on the regional economy, demographics and the projection. For the first time ***QRS*** is based on the current regional district boundaries in the lower mainland. Publishing interim reports on our Internet site means electronic subscribers do not have to wait for the next paper release in a month or so.

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